

Please amend claims 1 and 3 as follows:

1. (Amended) A purified or isolated peptide, wherein the peptide is
- a) a cartilage intermediate layer protein (CILP) comprising residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2,
  - b) an analog of a CILP comprising residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2, or
  - c) a fragment of a CILP or a CILP analog, wherein the fragment is immunoreactive with at least one antibody that is specific for a CILP comprising residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2, or a CILP analog comprising residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

3. (Amended) The peptide of claim 1, wherein the peptide is a human peptide, a cow peptide, a dog peptide, or a horse peptide.

Please add new claims 36-56, as follows:

- 36. (New) The peptide of claim 1, wherein said peptide is expressed in early osteoarthritis.

37. (New) The peptide of claim 1, wherein said peptide is a human peptide.

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38. (New) A CILP that is expressed in early osteoarthritis, wherein said CILP comprises an amino acid sequence that shows at least 50% amino acid identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2 and is immunoreactive with at least one antibody that is raised against a CILP encoded by SEQ ID NO:1.

39. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 60% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

40. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 70% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

41. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 80% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

42. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 90% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

43. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 95% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

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44. (New) The peptide of claim 38, wherein said peptide shows at least 99% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

45. (New) An isolated or purified CILP, wherein said CILP comprises residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2 and has a molecular mass of 92,000 when expressed in cells.

46. (New) An isolated or purified human CILP comprising an amino acid sequence that shows at least 90% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said human CILP has a calculated molecular mass of 78,500.

47. (New) The human CILP of claim 46, wherein said CILP comprises an amino acid sequence that shows at least 95% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

48. (New) The human CILP of claim 46, wherein said CILP comprises an amino acid sequence that shows at least 99% identity to residues 1-682 of SEQ ID NO:2.

49. (New) An isolated or purified CILP, wherein said CILP is produced by expressing a nucleic acid comprising the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 in a host cell and permitting the host cell to cleave the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid into said CILP and a nucleotide pyrophosphohydrolase, wherein said CILP has a molecular mass of 92,000 after processing by the cell.

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